



News From:

U.S. Congressman John B. Larson

serving Connecticut's First District

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Larson Announces Co-Opportunity to Receive Federal Funding for Education and Job Training for Local Youth

YouthBuild program helps young people and communities nationwide

Hartford, CT - U.S. Congressman John B. Larson (CT-01), Chairman of the Democratic Caucus, has announced that Secretary of Labor Hilda L. Solis awarded a federal grant to a Hartford non-profit organization in support of their education and job training program for young adults. Co-Opportunity was awarded a \$687,500 grant from the U.S. Department of Labor for the Hartford YouthBuild program.

The Youth Build program provides young adults, aged 16-24, from low income backgrounds the ability to work toward their high school diploma or GED while learning critical job skills by building affordable housing for the homeless and underprivileged. Participants spend 6-24 months in the full-time program, dividing their time between classroom studies and learning skills in construction.

In addition to receiving academic and occupational skills training, participants in the program develop leadership skills and take part in community service opportunities in the Greater Hartford area. Members of the YouthBuild program include individuals who have entered the juvenile justice system, aged out of foster care, and dropped out of high school.

"I am proud to announce Co-Opportunity will receive funding to continue their successful YouthBuild program. Youthbuild assists our young adults achieve educational and vocational skills, while showing them the importance of community service," said Congressman Larson, who wrote a formal letter of support for Co-Opportunity's grant application to Secretary Solis.

"Over the past 12 years, nearly 400 young men and women have been part of Co-opportunity's YouthBuild Hartford. We're excited that the grant being announced today gives us the opportunity to continue these important education and training services for Hartford youth," said Donna Taglianetti, Executive Director of Co-Opportunity.

Since its inception, YouthBuild Hartford has been one of the most accomplished and

successful YouthBuild programs in the country. More than 90 homes have been built by program members, and 87% of the graduates have secured jobs or pursued higher education within three month of graduating from the program.

Congressman Larson stated, "Co-Opportunity is empowering our young adults to become responsible community citizens. YouthBuild Hartford, with Co-Opportunity's leadership, will continue to serve as one of our nation's preeminent education and leadership development programs for troubled and disadvantaged youth."

In all, Secretary Solis awarded approximately \$114 million in funding to 183 community groups for YouthBuild programs nationwide. For more information on YouthBuild Hartford, please visit <http://www.co-opportunity.org/youthbuild.htm>.

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